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HINDU MONISM.

WHO WERE ITS AUTHORS, PRIESTS OR WARRIORS?

AMONG all the forms of government class government is the worst. Carthage was governed by merchants, and the mercantile spirit of its policy led finally to the destruction of the city. Sparta was governed by warriors, and in spite of the glory of Thermopylæ it was doomed to stagnation. India was governed by priests, and the weal of the nation was sacrificed with reckless indifference to their interests. It appears that for the welfare of the community the harmonious co-operation of all classes is not only desirable but also indispensable.

Yet it is often claimed that mankind is greatly indebted to nations or states ruled by class government, for having worked out the particular occupation of the ruling class to a perfection which otherwise it would not have reached. This is at least doubtful.

Carthage was eager to establish monopolies, but she contributed little to the higher development of commerce and trade among mankind.

Sparta raised brave men, but was not progressive, even in the science of war, and was worsted by so weak an adversary as Thebes. Modern strategists could learn something from Epaminondas, but little, if anything, from the Lacedæmonians.

Priestcraft has attained to a power in India unparalleled in the history of other nations, and it is no exaggeration to say that priest-rule was the ruin of the country. Yet the wisdom of the Brahmans has become proverbial. Their philosophy is praised as original and profound, and it is well known that the first monistic world-concep-

tion was thought out in ancient India. But we shall see later on what the real share of the Brahmans in this great work has been.

In the very earliest ages of Hindu antiquity, revealed to us in the songs of the Rig-veda, we meet with priests who claimed the power of making sacrifices to the gods in a manner especially acceptable to them, and who thus rose to great power, influence, and wealth. To this ancient period of Hindu history we can trace the origin of the Hindu castes, essentially a result of priestly egotism, and which up to this day has weighed down the Indian people like a nightmare. The organisation of the priestly class into an exclusive, privileged body, as well as the final development of the castes, did not, however, take place until the time represented by the second period of the ancient Hindu literature; by the literature, that is to say, of the Yajur-vedas or the Vedas of the sacrificial formulæ, and the Brâhmanas and Sûtras, both of which describe the sacrificial ceremonies, the former with, the latter without theological comments. The contents of these works illustrate the origin of the Hindu hierarchy and castes; but it is often necessary to read between the lines. The greatest authority on this rich literature, Prof. A. Weber, of Berlin, in the tenth volume of the series "Hindu Studies" which he edits, has published his inquiries concerning this subject in a very learned treatise, entitled "Collectanea über die Kastenverhältnisse in der Brâhmana und Sûtra," of which I have made considerable use in the following pages.

In these books the Brahmans assert their claims with startling candor. In several passages—to begin with the most striking feature—they announce themselves as real gods wandering on earth. "There are two kinds of gods," it is said, "the true gods and the learned Brahmans, who recite the Veda." "The Brahman represents all gods." "He is the god of gods." This is perhaps the most remarkable instance of priestly arrogance in all history. Thus it cannot at all surprise us that the Brahmans, as earthly gods, placed themselves above king and nobility; but it appears rather strange that the kings and warriors should have allowed to them the first place in the government. But as a matter of fact, they did do so and were compelled to do so. From mysterious legends in the great

Hindu epic poem we infer, that bloody wars have been waged for supremacy, in which the nobility was defeated.

The legends of this epos are thus important additions to the sources with which we are concerned. This struggle, which the Brahmins in all likelihood caused to be fought out for them by the great masses of the people, has been ascribed to the warriors having robbed the priests of the treasures which the latter had acquired by the performance of the sacrifices ; and this part of the legend is so highly probable that we cannot treat it as a pure myth, especially if we take into consideration the circumstances of those times. It was the first attempt at secularisation in the history of the world, and the results were very disastrous to those who were then in secular power.

The Brahmins did not establish a social hierarchy or ecclesiastical ranks, nor did they participate in the government, except that the king was bound to employ a Brahmin as Purohita or house-priest, who occupied as such the position of prime minister. If, however, they succeeded in dominating the nobility and the whole people, it was principally on account of their greater knowledge, of which they boasted, and especially on account of the sacrificial arts, by the proper exercise of which in those times, all favors could be obtained from the gods. For a duly performed sacrifice, which would last weeks, months, nay, years, the Brahmins charged of course a high fee. A fee of ten thousand oxen was prescribed for a certain ceremony, a hundred thousand for another one, and a later teacher of ritualism charged 240,000 for the same service. And this was not yet the climax of priestly avarice, which—to use an expression of Professor Weber—indulges in veritable orgies in these books. After one has gone through the endless description of a ceremony, one finds at the end the remark that the whole sacrifice has no effect, unless the proper fee be paid to the priest. And—to use a term of modern life—lest competition should reduce the prices or spoil the business, a rule was established, that no one should take a fee which another one had refused. (Weber, p. 54.)

The sacrificial rituals, so trying and tedious for us, are the only literary production of these dull centuries before the rising of phil-

osophical speculation, and the great historical importance they possess is simply due to the light they throw on the moral depravity of the Brahmans as a class.

The following fact will fully show to what extent sexual debaucheries were indulged in. The priest was enjoined, by a special rule, not to commit adultery with the wife of another during a particularly holy ceremony. But he who could not practice continence, was allowed to expiate his sin by an offering of milk to Varuna and Mitra.

Numerous passages in the books on ritualism furnish us interesting illustrations of the great indulgence which the Brahmans had for each other's weaknesses. The officiating priest is taught how to proceed during the sacrifice, if he wants to wrong the man who employs and pays him, or how to deviate from the prescribed rules, if he wants to rob his employer of his seeing, hearing, children, property, or position. The lack of confidence that resulted is best illustrated by a ceremony, the introduction of which, at the beginning of the sacrifice, became gradually necessary. By a solemn oath the officiating minister and the client bound themselves not to injure each other during the performance of the holy act. Consequently, the strange notions of right, which the Brahmans had in those times, will not surprise us. "Murder of any one but a Brahman is no murder." "An arbitrator must decide in favor of the Brahman and not in favor of his opponent, if the latter is not a Brahman." Such maxims are laid down in the texts with shameless insolence.

It is plain that the caste system greatly contributed to increase the power and influence of the priests, because in a country where the people are divided into classes, the priest always succeeds in inciting at his wish the one against the other.

After the Brahmans came as second caste the Kshattriyas (literally: the ruling class, i. e., king, nobility, soldiers); and as third caste the Vaisyas (the bulk of the people: farmers, merchants, etc.). The conquered non-Aryan aborigines were foreordained by the gods to serve the Aryan castes and especially the Brahmans. They were called Súdras (serfs) and had neither civil nor religious rights. "The Súdra is the servant of others; he can be cast out or killed."

By this humane maxim were the Brahmans guided in their conduct towards the aborigines.

With such a state of things, as it appears in the old books, the priesthood ought to have been well pleased. But the Brahmans were not ; they desired still greater advantages and carried out the caste system to a most absurd extent. The result is embodied in the famous law-book of Manu, the exact date of which we do not yet know, but which must be placed at the beginning of our era. The condition of things of which I shall now speak, was accordingly developed during the last centuries before Christ. Though we may suppose that some rules of this code have remained a mere theory and have never been carried out, there remains enough to show the social life of those times in a poor light. Köppen, in the first chapters of his book on Buddhism, has severely but justly judged the social organisation, as it appears in Manu's law-book ; but as the age of this code was overrated at his time, he was led to one erroneous conclusion : he attributes the historical process, of which we speak, to the period before Buddha, while it really took place after Buddha. L. von Schröder, in his work "Indian Literature and History," in the twenty-ninth lecture, gives us a good view of those times.

Different passages in Manu's code show us that the claim of the Brahmans to divinity had not decreased in the course of the centuries. "The Brahmans are to be venerated at all times, as they are the highest divinity." "By his very origin the Brahman is a god, even to the gods."

The many practical privileges they enjoyed were of still greater value. They were exempt from taxation under all circumstances, "even if the king should starve." For the greatest crimes they could not be executed or chastised, nor was their property liable to confiscation, while at the same time the criminal law was very harsh towards the other castes and especially towards the Súdras. The penalties increased proportionately : the lower the caste to which the criminal belonged, the higher the punishment ; and the fines also increased in proportion to the rank of the caste to which the injured man belonged. The money-lender was allowed to exact (monthly)

two per cent. of a Brahman, three of a Kshattriya, four of a Vaisya, five of a Súdra. All these laws show how the Brahmans understood the art of advancing their interests. The Súdra was by the code deprived of all rights. "The Brahman may consider him as a slave and is therefore entitled to take his property, as the property of the slave belongs to the master." "The Súdra shall not acquire wealth, even if he be in a position to do so, as such conduct gives offense to the Brahman."

But all these things are harmless when compared with the principles by which the Brahmans reduced to the most miserable of lives numberless human creatures who had committed no wrong except that their origin did not agree with the political scheme of the priests. Formerly it had been lawful for the members of the three Aryan castes, after having married a girl of the same caste, to take other wives of a lower caste besides, and no disgrace attached to their children. The son of a Brahman and a Vaisya—or even of a Súdra woman—was therefore a Brahman. But this was no longer the case under the code of Manu.

If the parents belonged to different castes, the children did not follow either father or mother, but they formed a mixed caste and the law distinctly regulates their occupations and trades. This theory gave birth to a great number of mixed castes, who were more or less despised. And the social standing of many of them grew still worse on account of an absurd maxim which degraded the Indian people to the level of grass and plants. Good seed in a bad soil gives of course a poorer return than in good soil ; still the crop is endurable. But weed introduced into good soil produces weed abundantly. According to this theory of the Brahmans the children were below the father, if he had married a wife of a higher caste. The lowest and most execrable creature therefore is the son of a Súdra and a Brahman woman. The destiny of a Súdra was of course hard and unhappy, but the misery of the offspring of such a marriage, of the Chandâla, defies all description. "He shall live far from the abodes of other men and bear signs by which everybody can recognise and avoid him, as his contact pollutes. Only in daytime shall he be admitted into the villages, as then people can avoid him. He shall

possess but common animals like dogs and donkeys, eat out of broken plates, put on the dresses of the dead, etc. They were compelled to serve as executioners. To the utmost degree of contempt and misery has the proud Brahman reduced these poor creatures." (Schröder, pp. 423-424.)

But the Chandâla was not the last in the Brahmanic scale, which suppressed all dignity in human nature ; his offspring, though he had only a wife of the Sûdra caste, was necessarily still below him. Thus originated a great number of mixed castes, one more despised than the other, and despising one another. Most of these outcasts take their names from the Indian aborigines and are thus placed on the same level with the most contemptible tribes. Some of the things I have cited about the mixed castes, may have been merely a theory of the Brahmans ; however, the actual existence of classes of people reduced by the clergy to a sort of animal life, has been sufficiently verified by foreign travellers.

In modern times the separation of the people has been going on very rapidly ; so much so, that nearly every trade or profession now forms a caste of its own, having no social intercourse with, nor patriotic feelings for the other castes. This condition of things is due to the influence of the Brahmans, for it has grown out of the social order they have founded.

It is not my task to arraign the Brahmans for the sins they have committed ; but simply to illustrate to my readers, how little they cared for and had at heart the interests of their people. One will, upon the whole, feel inclined to denounce the selfishness and immorality of the Brahmans, but on the other hand will acknowledge with admiration the intellectual work they have done, and forgive them much for the profound thoughts with which they have enriched their country and the whole world. Is it not the wisdom of the Brahmans that has given to the word India a sound that stirs the hearts of all to whom the struggle for the highest truth appears as the highest phenomenon in the history of civilisation? But suppose it can be shown that the greatest of all the wisdom of the Brahman, the monistic doctrine of the All-in-One, which has had the

greatest influence on the intellectual life of modern times, was not discovered by them ?

Before I enter on this question, of the greatest importance from an historical point of view, I will give a short sketch of the period of Indian history in which this doctrine was established.

For centuries the Brahmans had heaped sacrifice on sacrifice and multiplied symbolical explanations without end. All this distinctly bore the stamp of priestly sophistry. Suddenly higher thoughts arise. The learning handed down by tradition and the sacrificial system are, it is true, not altogether abandoned ; the mind, however, is no longer satisfied with the mysteries of the sacrifices, but aims at higher and more sublime truth. The age of intellectual darkness is followed by a new era, the characteristic of which is the ambition to solve the problems of life and to understand the relation of the individual to the absolute. All the efforts of the human mind are now bent on solving the question of the eternal Unity, from which all phenomena have emanated and which every one perceives within his own self. It is the age of the Upanishads, those famous books, which, as soon as they were known in Europe, filled all scholars with wild enthusiasm and admiration. I refer only to the old Upanishads, that date from the eighth to the sixth century B. C., not to the great number of books of the same name, but not of the same value—there are over 200 of them—which appeared after the Christian era. The Upanishads reveal the struggle of the mind to reach the highest truth. Though they indulge occasionally in strange speculations, still the idea of Brahma, of the universal soul, of the absolute, of the thing in itself, is the ever-recurring subject of their thoughts, which culminate in the idea that the Atman, the inner self of man, is naught but the eternal and endless Brahma. A wonderful pathos animates the language of the Upanishads and testifies to the sublime feelings in which the thinkers of those times sought the great mystery of existence. They look for all kinds of expressions, metaphors and figures, in order to couch in words what cannot be described by words. We read for instance in the venerable Brihadâraṇyaka Upanishad : “That which lives on the earth, but is different from the earth, that which is the moving power of

the earth, that is your Self, the inner immortal ruler." The same is predicated of water, fire, ether, wind, sun, moon, and stars ; and then the chapter ends as follows : " Unseen, he sees ; unheard, he hears ; unminded, he minds ; unknown, he knows. There is none that sees but he ; there is none that hears but he ; there is none that minds but he ; there is none that knows but he. He is thy soul, the inner ruler. Whatever is different from him, is perishable."

In the same celebrated Upanishad appears a woman, named Gârgî, and moved by thirst of knowledge she inquires of the wise Yâjñavalkya : " That which is beyond the sky and beneath the earth, and between sky and earth, that which is, was, and shall be, in what and with what is it interwoven (that is : in what does it live and move) ? " Yâjñavalkya, in order to try the intellectual power of the woman, gives an evasive answer : " In the ether." But Gârgî, perceiving that this answer did not contain the final truth, asks : " In what is the ether woven ? " And Yâjñavalkya replied : " O Gârgî, that is what the Brahman calls the Eternal ; it is neither big, nor small, nor large, nor short, without connection, without contact ; by the Eternal are ruled heaven and earth, sun and moon, days and nights ; the power of the Eternal directs the rivers south or west or to any other point of the compass. Whoever parts from this world without having understood the Eternal, is miserable."

In the Chândogya Upanishad, a book of no less importance, the same wisdom is taught by a man named Uddâlaka to his son Shvetaketu in the form of several parables. We see them standing in front of a Nyagrodha tree, that kind of fig-tree that everywhere sends roots from the branches down to the ground, thus producing new trunks, until in the course of time *one* tree resembles a green pillared hall. And in front of such a tree, the most beautiful symbol of ever-youthful nature, the following conversation takes place between father and son : " Get me a fruit of this tree."—" Here it is."—" Break it."—" It is broken."—" What do you see in it ?"—" I see quite small kernels."—" Break one of them."—" It is broken."—" What do you see in it ?"—" Nothing."—Then the father said : ' The fine matter that you cannot see has produced this big tree,

and believe me, my dear son, this same matter, of which the earth is composed, is the Absolute, the Universal Soul,—it is you.”

The eternal ground of all existence which every one carries in himself, Being as it is in itself, and as it is immediately perceived in thinking, was, accordingly recognised as the sole reality, and all the manifold changes of the phenomenal world were called Maya, a sham, a delusion, a mockery of the senses. We see, it is a consistent monism which is taught in the Upanishads.

I do not intend here either to criticise the Brahman conception of monism or to contrast it with modern forms of monism. All monisms have at least one thing in common, viz. they all recognise the paramount importance of consistency of thought as a basic principle in philosophy. And to have propounded a monism for the first time is a feat which cannot be overestimated. What remains of this essay will be devoted to the investigation of the question, whether this feat is duly or unduly credited to the Brahmins.

It may first be mentioned, that a few scholars like Weber, Max Müller, Regnaud, Deussen, and Bhandarkar, pointed out, a long time ago, certain facts which show that another class of the Hindu nation founded the monistic doctrine of the old Upanishads. But the attention of the great public has never been called to this subject, which deserves to be known by all interested in Indian history.

In the second book of the Brihadâraṇyaka Upanishad, of which I have already cited two passages, is found the following story, of which also the fourth book of Kaushîtaki Upanishad gives a slightly different version.

The proud and learned Brahman Bâlâki Gârġya comes on his journey to Ajâtashatru, prince of Benares, and says to him: “I will announce you the Brahma.” The king, highly pleased, promises him a great reward, a thousand cows. The Brahman begins to expound his wisdom: “The Spirit (that is the power) in the sun I venerate as the Brahma.” But the king interrupted him, saying that he knew that already. Then the Brahman speaks about the Spirit in the moon, in lightning, ether, wind, fire, water, but the king knows all that. And whatsoever the Gârġya might say, is not new to the king. The Brahman became silent. But Ajâtashatru

asked him : “ Is that all ? ” and Gârgya answered : “ Yes, that is all.” Then the king said : “ Your little knowledge is not the Brahma ; ” whereupon Gârgya declared that he should like to be one of the king’s pupils. Ajâtashatru replied : “ It is against nature, that a Brahman should learn from a warrior and depend on him for the understanding of the Brahma, but I will show it you nevertheless.” The king took him to a sleeping man and spoke to the latter ; but he did not get up. When the king touched him with his hand, he arose. The king then asked the Brahman : “ While this man was sleeping where was his mind, and whence did it return now ? ” Gârgya could not give an answer. Then the king explained to him, that the mind or the Self of the sleeping man was wandering around in dream, that all places were open to him, that he could be a great king or a great Brahman ; but that there was still a higher condition of felicity, that is, absorption in dreamless sleep, without consciousness. In this condition the Self of man, not affected by the outside world, reposes in his true essence and knows no difference between Atman and Brahma.

Another story, reported in the fifth book of Chândogya Upanishad and in the sixth book of Brihadâraṇyaka Upanishad, is perhaps of still greater importance.

The young Brahman Shvetaketu comes to a convention, where the King Pravâhana Jaivâli asks him : “ Has your father instructed you ? ”—“ Yes, sir.”—“ Do you know to what place the dead go ? ” And three more questions he put to the young Brahman, who was compelled to admit that he knew nothing about them. Discouraged, he returned to his father and reproached him : “ Although you have not imparted any knowledge to me, you claim that you have instructed me. A *simple king* has asked me three questions and I could not answer a single one.” The father replied : “ You have known me sufficiently to understand that I taught you all I knew. Come, let us go to the king and learn from him.” The king received the Brahman with great honors and requested him to select a present. But Gautama refuses all earthly gifts, gold, cows, horses, female slaves, and asks the king to answer the questions he had put to his son. At first the king was unwilling, but after a while he agreed

to it and said, that no one on earth could give information on those subjects, except a warrior. And the following words of the king's are very significant: "Would that neither you nor your ancestors had trespassed on us, that this truth might never have set up her residence among Brahmans. But to you, since you are so inquiring, I will communicate our wisdom."

Substantially the same story is found at the beginning of the Kaushîtaki Upanishad, except that the king appears under the name Chitra.

Omitting points of less importance, I shall only give in a brief form the contents of the eleventh and the following chapters of the fifth book of the Chândogya Upanishad, where again a man of the warrior caste, Ashvapati, prince of the Kekaya, is shown in possession of the highest wisdom. A number of highly learned Brahmans were speculating on the following problems: "What is our Self? What is the Brahma?" and they decided to go to Uddâlaka Aruni, who, as they knew, was investigating the "Omnipresent Self." But Aruni said to himself: "Now, they will ask me and I am not able to answer all their questions"; consequently he requested his visitors to go with him to Ashvapati. The latter receives them with great honors, invites them to stay with him, promising them presents as high as their fees for sacrifices. But they replied: "A man must communicate what he knows. You are just now seeking the 'Omnipresent Self'; disclose to us what it is?" The king said: "I will answer you to-morrow." The following day, without having received them among his pupils, that is, without a ceremonial reception as was usual, he asked them: "What do you venerate as the Self?" They replied: "Heaven, sun, wind, ether, water, earth." The king reminded them that they were all mistaken in considering the Omnipresent Self as a finite and limited being; it was the infinite, the infinitely small and the infinitely great.

The weight of these stories is very plain. Whether they refer to real facts or merely reflect the views of those times in the form of legends, cannot be decided. However, the question of the historical truth of these stories has no bearing whatever. The fact that they are to be found in genuine Brahmanic writings, in books which are

considered in India as the basis of the Brahman caste, speaks a plain language. It shows, that the thought of claiming the monistic doctrine of the Brahma-Atman as the inheritance of their caste, did not occur to the authors of the old Upanishads, or that they dared not claim it ; it may be that they did not yet realise the great importance of the same. Of course in the following ages this science became the exclusive property of the Brahmans and was cultivated and developed by them during twenty centuries—but this does not do away with the fact that it originated among the warrior caste. The men of this caste recognised at once the hollowness of the sacrificial system and its absurd symbolical character ; and to them is due the credit of having disclosed a new world of thought and of having accomplished a revolution in the intellectual life of Ancient India. When we learn that the Brahmans continued the sacrificial system, even after having adopted the new creed, and by representing religious ceremonials as the first step to knowledge, thus combined two wholly heterogeneous elements ; we may justly conclude that things have taken the same course in Ancient India as in other countries. Progressive ideas are first opposed by the priesthood, their born enemy, until they have become so powerful that they cannot be opposed any longer, whereupon the priest adopts them and tries to harmonise them with his superstitions.

But the ideas mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, the substance of what is commonly called “Hindu wisdom,” are not all that the warriors have done for the religion and philosophy of the people. The noble Gautama of Kapilavastu, the best known of all Hindus, who established Buddhism about 500 years before Christ, was also a Kshattriya, and according to the more recent tradition, which alone was formerly known, the son of a king ; but according to the earlier sources, disclosed by Oldenberg, he was the son of a landed proprietor. Buddha, “the Enlightened,” under which name he is known all over the world, most strenuously opposed the sacrificial system and the superstitions of the Brahmans. The ceremonies and the science of the priesthood seemed to him a perfect fraud, and the caste system an absurd institution ; he taught that the final beatitude is within the reach of the lowest man, as well as of

the Brahman and the king ; that every one, without distinction of birth, can attain to "salvation" by contempt of the world, self-denial, and devotion to the welfare of his fellow beings.

Oldenberg's excellent book on Buddha, the newest standard work on this subject, makes it unnecessary for me to dwell at length on the doctrine of the greatest of all Hindus ; only in regard to one important point, which has a direct bearing on the subject under consideration, do I differ from his opinion. According to the oldest sources, Buddha's method of teaching is, to a great extent, beyond the understanding of the bulk of the people ; not a popular, but an abstract philosophical one. For intrinsic reasons, I believe that the old sources do not give a correct report of this matter, and we must not forget that centuries separate them from Buddha. Oldenberg himself raises the point, whether the dry and tedious ecclesiastical style, in which Buddha's thoughts are clothed by those sources, truly reflects the spoken word. He says on page 181 : "Whoever reads the words which the sacred books attribute to Buddha will doubt that the form in which Buddha taught his precepts is to be identified with that abstract and sometimes abstruse metaphysical language. A youthful, invigorating spirit, pervading alike teacher and disciples, is the true picture of those times, admitting of no unnatural or artificial features."

In spite of this, he comes to the conclusion that "the solemn and stern way of speaking, peculiar to Buddha, has been better expressed by tradition than by what we would feel tempted to substitute." I am not of this opinion. In India a great success could not have been obtained but by overpowering eloquence and a popular method, intelligible to all, and proceeding by parables and metaphors.

If Buddha had only appealed to the intellect of his nearest surroundings, consisting merely of aristocratic elements, if he had not found his way to the heart of the people, his monastery would very likely have shared the destiny of the other religious congregations of his age, which have all disappeared, except one. As the doctrines of these monasteries or their founders do not substantially differ from each other, and as it cannot be ascribed to mere chance that

Buddha's doctrine has developed into a universal religion, having the greatest number of adherents, there remains but one hypothesis to account for this fact, and that is the superiority of Buddha's way of teaching. The erroneousness of the generally prevailing opinion that Buddha was in his time the only founder of a new religion, and that he suddenly revolutionised the social organisation of the Indian people, has been clearly established by recent investigation¹³. In fact, he was a "primus inter pares," one of those numerous ascetics who were striving for and preaching "liberation" from the eternal transmigration.

Besides Buddha's, only one congregation has survived: the Jaina, having numerous members in the western part of India. The principles of the Jaina are very similar to those of Buddha; so much so that until recently it was considered merely as a sect of Buddhism, while it is really a religion of its own, founded by a contemporary or a predecessor of Buddha, named Vardhamâna Jnâtaputra—in the language of the people, Vaddhamâna Nâtaputta—in the same part of the country where Buddha rose. The only difference between the two religions is this: Vardhamâna lays great stress on castigation; while the more progressive Buddha declares it useless—nay, pernicious. The important point in regard to the object of our essay is this: that the founder of Jaina, which occupies a high place in the history of Hindu culture, was also a member of the Warrior Caste.

We shall now have to consider another production of the Indian mind, the very name of which is unknown to most of our readers, although it offers the most interesting religious problems. I refer to the doctrine of the Bhâgavatas or Pâncharâtras. These names, of which the former is the earlier and original one, designate a religious sect in North India, whose existence in the fourth century B. C. is authentically proved, but which can be placed with great probability in the time before Buddha. They professed a common-sense monotheism, independent of the traditions of the old Brahmans, and venerated God under different names: Bhagavant, "The Sublime," whence their name is derived; Nârâyana, "Son of Man;" Purushottamma, "The Supreme Being"; but generally under the name

Krishna Vāsudeva, “Son of Vāsudeva”. The character of their worship produced feelings identical with the Christian love and devotion to God. The Hindu word for this feeling is Chakti, and for him who was penetrated by the same, Chakta. As the word Chakti cannot be found or has not been found in the Hindu literature earlier than the era of Christ, several scholars are inclined to attribute the Chakti to the influence of Christianity, especially Professor Weber, who deserves the highest praise for his researches concerning Krishna worship. Weber has proved in several of his books, especially in a highly interesting treatise on Krishna’s birth, that numerous Christian notions have entered into the later Krishna legends (the similarity of the names, Krishna and Christ, accounts for it): for instance, the birth of Christ among the shepherds, the story about the stable, and others of the same kind. In spite of this, I cannot embrace the opinion that the Chakti has been brought from a foreign country, because its first appearance belongs to a period in which Christian influences cannot be found. As I cannot go into details without discussing very difficult points, requiring a great deal of erudition, I will only say that whoever is familiar with the old Hindu civilisation will easily understand that the Chakti is of genuine Hindu origin. Monotheistic notions can be traced to the oldest periods of Hindu antiquity, and the Hindu mind has always been animated by a high aspiration towards God; so that it should not surprise us that this feature of the Hindu character has produced a religion popular and independent of philosophical speculation, consisting in love and devotion to God. The founder of this religion was Krishna Vāsudeva, afterwards raised to divine dignity, or rather identified with the deity; from his name and from the legends attached to his name, he was a member of the Warrior Caste. As early as the epoch of the Mahābhārata, the great Indian epic poem, the Brahmans appropriated to themselves the name and work of Krishna, and transformed the venerated hero into the God Vishnu; thus increasing their strength by adopting a doctrine not of Brahmanic origin.

We have thus found that the profound philosophical monism of the Upanishads, the highly moral religions of Buddha and Jaina,

and last, not least, the creed of the Bhâgavatas, based on pure devotion to God, did not originate among the Brahmans.

However favorably we may judge of the achievements of the Brahmans in all branches of science, and I am far from vilifying their merits, still it is certain that the greatest intellectual performances of India, nay, all such in India that have been beneficial to mankind, were accomplished by men of the Warrior Caste.

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